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MARKETING
THEORY AND PRACTICE

edited by
Michael J. Baker

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Preface

The enigma of marketing is that it is one of man's oldest activities and yet it is widely regarded as the most recent of the business disciplines. In this book we examine some of the reasons which seem to us to account for this apparent contradiction as well as indicating why the theory and practice of marketing must be integrated if the profession of marketing is to achieve the status and credibility of professions such as the law or medicine.

In fact many interesting parallels may be drawn between the evolution and growth of these latter professions, especially medicine and marketing. Like medicine, marketing has been practised for thousands of years and has built up an enormous wealth of descriptive information concerning the 'art'. Familiarity with this descriptive base has now become an essential prerequisite, for it contains both the language or 'jargon' which is a feature of any specialised activity as well as the 'case-law' which enables past experience to be applied to present and future problems. However, as we note in Chapter 2, the foundation of the modern profession of medicine is generally agreed to have been laid with the transition from description to analysis which accompanied Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. Since this discovery medicine has borrowed extensively from other sciences in developing its own theory and body of knowledge, but at the same time it has recognised that the practice demands the establishment of a relationship with the patient which mitigates direct translation of theory into practice.

It is our view that if marketing is to progress it must achieve a similar transition from art to applied science as has been attained by medicine and that to do this it must establish a sound theoretical foundation in its own right. Further, we would argue that, in time, knowledge of this theoretical basis should become an essential qualification for practice and that

those without it will become the 'quacks' of their profession. Much of this book constitutes an elaboration of this view.

In Part 1, 'The Foundations of Marketing', we trace the evolution of the marketing concept from its origins in barter to its modern statement as a managerial philosophy of business. Based on this historical review we next consider the need for theory in marketing as a preliminary to a survey of possible sources for such a theory. In Part 2, 'Evolution of Marketing Thought', we examine the theoretical foundations of four areas of central importance to the practice of marketing – consumer behaviour, communications, distribution and innovation. Of necessity such a review must be eclectic, but hopefully it will suffice to substantiate our claim as to the practical value of developing theory in marketing and will encourage the reader to extend his studies of the sources cited. Finally, in Part 3, 'New Directions in Marketing', we summarise current thinking on the application of marketing concepts and techniques beyond consumer-goods markets, with which it is traditionally associated, before concluding with a brief look at some of the sources of criticism of marketing.

Given the scope which we are attempting within such a small volume it will readily be appreciated that our efforts must represent a compromise between the breadth of coverage necessary to sustain our basic purpose of establishing the nature and relevance of marketing and the inextricable relationship between theory and practice, and the depth essential to raise the discussion above the trivial. To help reconcile these conflicting aims five authors have co-operated in developing material and their contributions are as follows:

Chapters 1, 7, 8 and 9	Michael J. Baker;
Chapters 2 and 3	Michael J. Baker and D. E. N. Dickson;
Chapter 4	Jennifer L. Drayton;
Chapter 5	Stephen T. Parkinson;
Chapter 6	A. J. Brown.

While each of these authors is responsible for his or her own contribution and any merit which the book possesses in whole or in part is to his or her personal credit, any deficiencies are the sole responsibility of the principal author.

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